

Texts in the Indigenous Languages of the Americas: Uto-Aztecan Narratives

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SOUTHEASTERN TEPEHUAN¹

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Southern Tepehuan is a Uto-Aztecan language of the Tepiman subgroup, which has three recognized varieties: Southeastern Tepehuan (O'dam, ISO 639-3 [stp]), Southwestern Tepehuan (Audam, ISO 639-3 [tla]), and Central Tepehuan (also known as O'dam) (Ambriz 2002; INALI 2008). There are approximately 36,543 speakers of Southern Tepehuan (INEGI 2015). Southern Tepehuan is most closely related to Pima, Northern Tepehuan, O'odham, and Tepecano (extinct), although it neighbors the more genetically distant Cora and Huichol. There is no agreement as to the vitality of any of the varieties of the languages. Valiñas (2019) mentions that *Ethnologue* qualifies Southeastern Tepehuan as a developing language and Southwestern Tepehuan as a vigorous language. However, INALI claims that Southeastern and Southwestern Tepehuan are not immediately at risk of extinction but Central Tepehuan is at medium risk because the younger generation has stopped speaking the language in most contexts. While there are currently many speakers of Southern Tepehuan, the reality is that these speakers are witnessing major changes in the use and transmission of the language because of contact with other languages (such as Spanish) and ongoing disputes over their lands and rights. These pressures accelerate language shift away from Southern Tepehuan.

CHAM EKAMTAM²

'PLACE OF UNFULFILLMENT'

GUADALUPE RAMOS CARRILLO

The text presented here is called "cham ekamtam" (Place of Unfulfillment) and is told in the Southeastern Tepehuan variety. The genre is what is known as a *sapok* by speakers. For the Tepehuan, all knowledge is passed down orally. We present this text because its content is of the utmost importance to the O'dam people. This *sapok* narrates the origin of a ceremonially important place called *cham*

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² This online version of this chapter includes audio content.

TABLE 1
 CONSONANTS IN SOUTHEASTERN TEPEHUAN (WILLETT 1991)

	bilabial	alveolar	post-alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
plosives	p [p]	t [t]		dh	k [k]	' [ʔ]
	b [bh]	d [d]		[dʒ]	g [g]	
nasal	m [m]	n [n]		ɲ [ɲ]		
tap or flap		r [r]				
fricative	b [β]	s [s]	x [ʃ]	ch[tʃ]		j [h]
lateral		lh [ɬ]				
aproximant				y [j]		

ékamtam ‘place of unfulfillment’. For the O’dam, this is a place where one goes to heal, ask forgiveness, or both, especially when one fails to properly perform a previous curing ritual.

The *umuag+m* or *curandero* is in charge of the *xiotalh*, the Tepehuan name for the *mitote* ceremony; the *umuag+m* is a community member who is dedicated to carrying out this ritual and notifies all of the community members and relatives to initiate the *xiotalh*. In this text, the *umuag+m*, in fulfilling his duties, went to announce the beginning of the *xiotalh* and got into trouble with two girls who disrespected him. Because of that, the *umuag+m* became sick and died. The last request of the *umuag+m*’s soul (after death) was to be taken to the cave that became *cham ékamtam* so that people like him, who were not to blame for not performing the ritual, can go and heal on his behalf.

This *sapok* was narrated and shared by Guadalupe Ramos Carrillo in 2016. The story was recorded in Ramos’s house. He was 56 years old at the time and was born in La Cofradía, a village near Santiago Teneraca, where there are approximately 5,000 speakers. Ramos never attended school, although he is bilingual in O’dam and Spanish. His main occupation is working in agriculture. In transcribing the text, we followed the orthographic standards agreed upon by the Ministry of Public Education.

TABLE 2
 VOWELS IN SOUTHEASTERN TEPEHUAN (WILLETT 1991)

	front	central	back
close	i	+	u
close-mid		ɛ [ə]	o
open		a	

- (1) *siete* sap up ba' ba tini'da' am bhai'dhir gu mimii'ñkalth,
 siete sap up ba' ba-tini'-da'-am
 seven REP IT SEQ COMPL-dance-APPL-3PL.SBJ
 bhai'-dhir gu mi~mii'ñkalth
 towards.here-from ART PL~Taxicaringa
 'They were dancing for seven days, those in Taxicaringa.'³
- (2) sap ba' . . .
 sap ba'
 REP SEQ
 'so then . . .'
- (3) joot amit na tu umua'ñdhara' para basi'ndir ja'k para . . .
 joot-amit na tu-umua'ñ-dha-ra-' para
 send-3PL.SBJ.PFV SBRD DUR-ask.favor-APPL-MOV-IRR for
 basi'n-dir ja'k para
 side-from here for
 'They sent someone for help for the other side, for . . .'
- (4) para dhi balhcha'm pai' ja'p pai' jik na jir kikcham
 para dhi balh-cha'm pai' ja'p pai'
 for PROX basket-in where PTC where
 jik na jir-kik-cham
 how.many SBRD COP-house-in
 'for those in The Basket over there where there are houses'⁴
- (5) sap ba',
 sap ba',
 REP SEQ
 'so then . . .'
- (6) bhai' bhaja'k pai' sap jir . . .
 bhai' bha-ja'k pai' sap jir
 towards.here towards.here-here where REP COP
 'here (above) around here that was . . .'
- (7) dibirkat pai' sap jir kikcham gok mu sap ba' ba ai
 dibir-ka-t pai' sap jir-kik-cham gok
 earth-STV-IPFV where REP COP-house-in two

³ The word for a person from Taxicaringa is *mii'ñkalth*. This is related to the toponym *mii'ñcham* 'burn' plus the postposition particle *-cham* 'Taxicaringa' to refer to place names.

⁴ *Balhcha'm* 'The Basket' is the name of a town.

mu sap ba' ba-ai
 over.there REP SEQ COMPL-arrive

'so on that land there, Thrown Earth, were two houses where (the help-seeker) arrived'

- (8) sap ba'
 sap ba'
 REP SEQ

'so then . . .'

- (9) pui' ja titda gui' na . . .
 pui' ja-titda gui' na
 SENS 3PL.OBJ-say DIST SBRD

'so (the help-seeker) said to them that . . .'

- (10) ba' sap bar ba tuxiotalhcha' am
 ba' sap ba-tu-xiotalh-cha-'am
 SEQ REP COMPL-DUR-mitote-CAUS-3PL.SBJ

'that they were starting the *mitote*'

- (11) sap ba' pui chi'nda am gui', nam bhai' ba jim
 sap ba' pui chi'nda-am gui' na=m
 REP SEQ SENS say-3PL.SBJ DIST SBRD=3PL.SBJ
 bhai' ba-jim
 towards.here COMPL-go:PRS

'and they told him that they will come (to the *mitote*)'

- (12) dai sap ja'mni gok am bha daraa gu u'ub titiya
 dai sap ja'm-ni gok am bha
 only REP PTC-PREC two 3PL.SBJ towards.here
 daraa gu u'~ub ti-tiya
 sit.PL ART PL~woman PL~young

'but that there were only two, two girls'

- (13) sap ba', ba ja tan sap gu sudi'
 sap ba' ba-ja-tan sap gu sudi'
 REP SEQ COMPL-3PL.OBJ-give:PFV REP ART water

'so then he asked for water'

- (14) sap ba' mui' xi baxbhimit
 sap ba' mui' xi-baxbhi-mit
 REP SEQ DIST.ADV IMP-serve-3PL.SBJ:PFV

'and they gave it to him'

- (15) sap ba' dhi' ba' mui' ba ja maa gu *tas* mi bii sap palhip gu sudi'
 sap ba' dhi' ba' mui' ba-ja-maa gu
 REP SEQ PROX SEQ DIST.ADV COMPL-3PL.OBJ-give ART
 tas mi bii sap palhip gu sudi'
 cup MED.ADV remain:PFV REF little ART water
 '(when he finished the water) he returned the glass to them, it had a
 little bit of water left'
- (16) pui' sap a'nkup ba' jix chanom ji ja'p sap titda am
 pui' sap a'nkup ba' jix=chanom ji
 SENS REP disapproval REP COP=thirsty FOC
 ja'p sap titda-am
 PTC REP say:PFV-3PL.SBJ
 "we thought you were thirsty," they said to him'
- (17) na ba' gan bhaja'k jich chan ti' nat ba' mi bii ja'p, sap kai'ch
 na ba' gan bha-ja'k jich-chan
 SBRD SEQ no.reason towards.here-here 1PL.OBJ-ask:PFV
 ti' na=t ba' mi bii
 look:PFV SBRD=3SG.SBJ:PFV SEQ MED.ADV stay:PFV
 ja'p sap kai'ch
 PTC REP say
 "so you asked us (ridiculously) to see if any was left"
- (18) sap ba' bhai' pu toi' mit, ya'ni ja'p pai' nat ai sap bhai' ba ji sap gui'
 sap ba' bhai' pu toi'-mit ya'-ni
 REP SEQ towards.here SENS throw-3PL.SBJ:PFV there-PREC
 ja'p pai' na=t ai sap bhai'
 PTC where SBRD=3SG.SBJ:PFV arrive:PFV REP towards.here
 ba-ji sap gui'
 COMPL-go:PFV REP DIST
 'then they threw (the water that was left) at him, they threw it at him,
 then he left'
- (19) palhip sap ba'n ya'ni ja'p pai' nat ji'x bha toi' nat ji'x ai
 palhip sap ba'n ya'-ni ja'p pai'
 little REP wet there-PREC PTC where
 na=t-ji'x bha-toi'
 SBRD=3SG.SBJ:PFV-how.many towards.here-throw
 na=t-ji'x ai
 SBRD=3SG.SBJ:PFV-how.many arrive:PFV
 'he was a little bit wet there, where they threw water at him, where
 water got him'

- (20) sap ba' bhaja'k bajim sap ba' . . .
 sap ba' bha-ja'k ba-jim sap ba'
 REP SEQ towards.here-here COMPL-go:PRS REP SEQ
 'then he came to the place'
- (21) pix am ja'p jix chuko'k sap, bhai' sap mo xi jim jir ma'n
 pix am ja'p jix=chu-ko'k sap bhai'
 MIR LOC PTC COP=DUR-pain REP towards.here
 sap mo xi-jim jir=ma'n
 REP doubt IMP-go:PRS COP=one
 'and he began to feel sore, but he kept walking without stopping'
- (22) mi akki'n nat jur, am sap mi' ba daraa gu u'ub gui' na bhammi
 ka'n . . .
 mi ak-ki'n na=t jur am
 MED.ADV river-with SBRD=3SG.SBJ.PFV get.down LOC
 sap mi' ba-daraa gu u'~ub
 REP MED.ADV COMPL-sit.PL ART PL~woman
 gui' na bhammi ka-'n
 DIST SBRD up STV-3SG.POSS
 'when he went down to the river the women (who threw water at
 him) were sitting there, the ones who'
- (23) dir bha toi' gu sudai'
 dir bha-toi' gu sudai'
 from towards.here-throw ART water
 'threw water at him'
- (24) sap ba' mi' mi' nat pui' xi ja ñiokdhak sap
 sap ba' mi' mi' na=t
 REP SEQ MED.ADV MED.ADV SBRD=3SG.SBJ:PFV
 pui' xi-ja-ñiok-dha-k sap
 SENS IMP-3PL.OBJ-speak-APPL-PUNCT REP
 'then he greeted them'
- (25) sap ba' giop ba tu a'gi'ñ am sap
 sap ba' gio=p ba-tu-a'gi'-ñ-am sap
 REP SEQ COORD=IT COMPL-DUR-talk-APPL-3PL.SBJ REP
 'and spoke to them again'
- (26) cham tu' sap ka ñiokim nagu' bax mat na mit jax alhio, nagu no'mit
 gu gio pui'p jiñ dhoda nagu' . . .
 chamtu' sap ka-ñiok-im na=gu' ba-x=mat
 NEG REP PRF-speak-PROG SBRD=ADV COMPL-COP=know

na=mit-jax alhio na=gu' no'=mit
 SBRD=3PL.SBJ:PFV-how do:PFV SBRD=ADV COND=3PL.SBJ:PFV
 gu gio pui'=p jiñ-dhoda na=gu'
 ART COORD SENS=IT 1SG.OBJ-do SBRD=ADV

'he did not say anything because he knew what they did and what if they do that again, because'

- (27) jix xidhu tu' añ ja'p sap jum a', ma'n sap na jim bhaja'k ñir ba bus sap tibip sudi' titi' mi'

jix=xidhu-tu'-iñ ja'p sap jum-a'
 COP=blessed-CAUS-1SG.SBJ PTC REP MID-think

ma'n sap na jim bha-ja'k ñir
 one REP SBRD go:PRS towards.here-here from
 ba-bus sap tibip sudi' titi' mi'
 COMPL-go.out REP big water call MED.ADV

'I come blessed, he thought, he went his way he left for Big Water, it is called there'

- (28) mi' sap ba' ba tuñi'ñ cham ka bhai' na jimia', mi' sap ba' pup bo' mi' sap ba' ba-tu-ñi'ñ cham ka

MED.ADV REP SEQ COMPL-DUR-temperature NEG PRF

bhai' na jimia-a' mi' sap ba'
 towards.here SBRD go-IRR MED.ADV REP SEQ
 pu=p bo'
 SENS=IT lay.down

'he got a fever (lit. temperature) there, he could not go on so he stayed there'

- (29) ba' mui' ba gaagam amit ba' sap, na mui' ba . . . pa ja'k bhii ja'p sap jum a' am

ba' mui' ba-gaagam-amit ba' sap na
 SEQ DIST.ADV COMPL-look.for-3PL.SBJ:PFV SEQ REP SBRD

mui' ba pa ja'k bhii ja'p
 DIST.ADV SEQ where here go:PFV PTC
 sap jum-a'-am
 REP MID-think-3PL.SBJ

'they went looking for him. Where did he go? they thought'

- (30) sap gu ba muu ji mi' pui' xi bo'kat, mukxikam, gë' nagu . . .

sap gu ba-muu ji mi' pui'
 REP ART COMPL-die:PFV FOC MED.ADV SENS

xi-bo'-ka-t muk-xi-kam gë' na=gu'
 IMP-lay.down-STV-IPFV die-RES-origin AFFIRM SBRD=ADV

'so he died lying there, died there, yes because . . .'

- (31) bha tu ñi'ñ jix io'm
 bha ba-tu-ñi'ñ jix=io'm
 towards.here COMPL-DUR-temperature COP=strong
 '(that place) gave him a strong fever'
- (32) sap ba' mui'dhit gu ja'tkam bhai' chii bhíbhí am cham tu' na ko' am
 sap ba' mui'-dhit gu ja'tkam bhai'
 REP SEQ many-between ART people towards.here
 chii bhíbhí-am chamtu' na ko'-am
 NR bring-3PL.SBJ NEG SBRD carry-3PL.SBJ
 'many people tried to bring him, but they could not carry him'
- (33) mui' sap mi' pui' chii bua' am cham tu' poderu mit na mit jaxdhukat
 bha bhik pui'm mi'
 mui' sap mi' pui' chii bua'-am chamtu'
 many REP MED.ADV SENS NR do-3PL.SBJ NEG
 poderu-mit na=mit-jax dhu-ka-t
 can-3PL.SBJ:PFV SBRD=3PL.SBJ:PFV-how do-STV-IPFV
 bha bha bhik pui'=m mi'
 towards.here towards.here bring SENS=3PL.SBJ MED.ADV
 'between all of them, they tried, but they could not bring him there'
- (34) sap ba' ma ji chim di'n, ti di'n amit sap ba' pui ja'k ba ai mit na ki'n
 sap ba' ma ji-chi-m-di'n
 REP SEQ doubt INCEP-DUR-MID-smoke
 ti-di'n-amit sap ba' pui ja'k
 DUR-cure-3PL.SBJ:PFV REP SEQ SENS here
 ba-ai-mit na=ki'n
 COMPL-arrive-3PL.SBJ:PFV SBRD=with
 'so they started to cure, making the curing ceremony, and they arrived with him'
- (35) bhai' pai' pui' tikia' am uxcha'm tɛ'kub bottotaji bhai'
 bhai' pai' pui' tikia'-am ux-cha'm tɛ'kub
 towards.here where SENS put-3PL.SBJ stick-on up
 botto-ta-ji bhai'
 bed-VRBLZ-DC towards.here
 'they put him up there, on a bed made of sticks there'
- (36) maiñ cha'm bhíbgaji bhai' chikia am na miñhia' gu bakxiga'n, sap
 ba' . . .
 maiñ cha'm bhíbga-ji bhai' chikia-am
 mat NEG roll-DC towards.here put-3PL.SBJ

- na milhia-’ gu bakxi-ga-’n sap ba’
 SBRD run-IRR ART flesh-AL-3SG.POSS REP SEQ
 ‘rolling him up in a mat so that his body runs (undoes), so then’
- (37) bhammu pai’ basi’n pai’ chiub ba’ bhai’ na jax ba kat, bhammi jix
 agim na pui’ kiichuda’
 bhammu pai’ basi’n pai’ chiub ba’ bhai’
 up where side where cave SEQ towards.here
 na=jax ba-kat bhammi jix=ag-im
 SBRD=how COMPL-laid.down up COP=think-DES
 na pui’ kii-chu-da’
 SBRD SENS house-CAUS-APPL
 ‘there, over there in a cave where he already lies (thrown), there
 where he wants to make his home’
- (38) mo sap pui’ ba’ ja’k ba du mit, mo nat pai’ miï gu bakxiga’n amit
 sap ba’
 mo sap pui’ ba’ ja’k ba-du-mit
 doubt REP SENS SEQ here COMPL-do-3PL.SBJ:PFV
 mo na=t-pai’ miï gu
 doubt SBRD=3SG.SBJ:PFV-where burn.PFV ART
 bakxi-ga-’n=amit sap ba’
 body-AL-3SG.POSS=3PL.SBJ:PFV REP SEQ
 ‘and they made him in that way, when they burned his body’
- (39) ba icha gu a’o’n bhammu ja’k amit aich na pai’ jir chiub
 ba-icha gu a’~o’n bhammu ja’k=amit
 COMPL-put ART PL~bone up here=3PL.SBJ:PFV
 ai-ch na=pai’ jir=chiub
 arrive-CAUS SBRD=where COP=cave
 ‘they put his bones (in a bag), they took him to where the cave was’
- (40) bhai’ sap ba’ pui’ bii na jax ba’ pui bam titi’ sap na jir o’dam cham
 ekamtam dhi’ . . .
 bhai’ sap ba’ pui’ bii na=jax ba’
 towards.here REP SEQ SENS stay.PFV SBRD=how SEQ
 pui ba-m-titi’ sap na jir=o’dam
 SENS COMPL-MID-call REP SBRD COP=tepehuan
 cham ə-kam-tam dhi’
 NEG give-origin-on PROX
 ‘there he stayed, as it is called, “O’dam” (where it is not fulfilled),
 this’

- (41) *jix dhuadhi' sap no' ñich bhai' cham jiñ aich ya' ja'p pai'*
jix=dhua-dhi' sap no'=ñich bhai' cham
 COP=cure-APPL REP COND=1SG.SBJ:PFV towards.here NEG
jiñ-ai-ch ya' ja'p pai'
 1SG.OBJ-arrive-CAUS there PTC where
 'it is healing (to go to that place) if I am not fulfilled'
- (42) *nañ bhai xiñ chianmiraji*
na=ñ bhai xi-ñ-chian-mira-ji
 SBRD=1SG.SBJ towards.here IMP-1SG.OBJ-pray-MOV-DC
 'if I come here to cure me (ritual)'
- (43) *mi' tu namkidha' iñ ji'k na pui' ki'n dudhia' iñ*
mi' tu-namki-dha'-iñ ji'k na
 MED.ADV DUR-pay-APPL-1SG.SBJ how.many SBRD
pui' ki'n du-dhia'-iñ
 SENS with IT-cure-1SG.SBJ
 'there I pay with what I will cure'
- (44) *ja'pni ja'k pix mi' pui ji pix ji juu ba' dhi' asta ai nomas dai pui'*
ja'p-ni ja'k pix mi' pui ji
 PTC-PREC here MIR MED.ADV SENS FOC
pix ji juu ba' dhi' asta
 MIR FOC finish:PFV SEQ PROX until
ai nomas dai pui'
 there only only SENS
 'so that is how it is here, it is over, until then it is over'